

PART IV

THE PATTERN OF AGRICULTURE

Number and Size of Farms

As growth of railroads brought an increased interest in agriculture, farm numbers increased sharply in Franklin County--from 61 in 1900 to 620 ten years later. Drought and depression caused a reduction in the number of farms that continued until irrigation development began in the early 1950's. Many pioneer farms and homesteads were abandoned, sold, or combined with holdings of farmers that remained. Total farmland in the county has shown a fairly steady increase, with some dips, over the years to about 590,000 acres in 1959. Acreage control programs and creation of the Atomic Energy Commission Reservation in western Franklin and neighboring counties was largely responsible for a 100,000 acre reduction in farmland between 1950 and 1954. Acreage more than regained its former level five years later as further irrigation development opened more land.

Average farm size generally grew larger from 1910 to 1950 as farms were consolidated, then dropped from 1,765 acres in 1950 to 795 acres in 1959 as former dry-land acreages were brought under irrigation and divided into smaller family units. Much of the land within the irrigation project was bought up by the government and resold, after development of irrigation facilities, to qualified applicants selected at public drawings. Preference was given to veterans of military service. Federal law fixed the size of these farm units. Depending on the class of land, family-sized units ranged from 50 to 160 acres.

Table 8. Farms, Number and Average Size, Land in Farms, Franklin County, 1900-1959.

Year	Total Farms in the County	Average Size of Farms in the County (acres)	Total County Area in Farms (acres)	Percent of County Area in Farms
1900	61	1,665	101,547	12.6
1910	620	626	387,832	48.0
1920	414	1,102	456,056	59.1
1930	354	1,564	553,547	71.7
1940	363	1,231	447,004	55.3
1945	300	1,849	554,657	68.7
1950	331	1,765	584,097	72.3
1954	413	1,163	480,390	59.6
1959	742	795	590,027	73.2

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Table 9. Franklin County's Rank Compared With Other Washington Counties.

Item Compared	Rank	Quantity
<u>General</u>		
Land area.....	27	806,400 acres
Number of farms.....	25	742 farms
Land in farms--percent.....	10	73.2 percent
Average size of farms.....	12	795 acres
Cropland harvested.....	10	164,228 acres
Irrigated land in farms.....	4	60,295 acres
Rural farm population.....	20	3,153 persons ^{1/}
Total County population.....	21	23,342 persons <u>1/</u>
<u>Cash farm income</u>		
Value of all farm products sold....	18	13,901,871 dollars ^{2/}
Value of livestock sold.....	18	3,596,711 dollars <u>2/</u>
Value of crops sold.....	12	10,305,160 dollars <u>2/</u>
<u>Livestock on farms</u>		
All cattle and calves.....	21	20,757 head
Milk cows.....	24	1,757 head
Hogs.....	5	8,902 head
Chickens.....	33	11,844 head ^{3/}
Horses and mules.....	24	567 head
Sheep and lambs.....	7	16,550 head
<u>Dairy and poultry products sold</u>		
Value of dairy products sold.....	20	795,271 dollars
Whole milk sold.....	19	17,875,136 pounds
Value of poultry products sold.....	32	37,607 dollars
Chickens sold.....	34	6,065 birds
Eggs sold.....	32	99,844 dozen
<u>Important crops harvested</u>		
Winter wheat.....	9	77,033 acres
Barley.....	10	20,880 acres
Alfalfa hay.....	9	15,205 acres
Spring wheat.....	5	11,064 acres
Rye.....	5	10,962 acres
Dry beans.....	3	9,407 acres
Corn.....	5	6,373 acres
Potatoes.....	4	2,489 acres
Dry peas.....	6	1,622 acres
Sugar beets.....	5	1,610 acres

^{1/} 1960 Census of Population.^{2/} Based on reports from only a sample of farms.^{3/} Chickens four months old and over.

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1959.

Table 10. Number of Farms, Land in Farms and Value of Livestock and Crops Sold Off Farms, Washington Counties -- 1959

County	Number of Farms	All land in Farms (acres)	Value of all Crops Sold Off Farms (dollars)	Value of all Livestock and their Products Sold Off Farms (dollars)
Adams	786	1,076,960	21,055,532	3,547,300
Asotin	325	364,405	2,589,582	1,179,464
Benton	1,281	562,809	12,912,165	3,958,996
Chelan	1,636	215,646	16,877,563	660,083
Clallam	724	68,739	706,055	2,858,512
Clark	2,778	188,479	3,020,725	8,222,499
Columbia	333	359,134	9,778,027	1,148,786
Cowlitz	1,014	80,176	1,022,291	2,808,884
Douglas	935	1,012,561	12,985,276	1,067,743
Ferry	283	298,247	396,384	931,057
Franklin	742	590,027	10,305,160	3,596,711
Garfield	274	344,094	6,871,789	898,109
Grant	1,497	1,075,642	26,083,038	12,555,694
Grays Harbor	896	99,529	924,067	2,639,777
Island	493	38,702	515,863	1,909,572
Jefferson	266	35,123	212,568	758,107
King	2,952	114,719	6,240,212	14,298,190
Kitsap	906	29,776	437,819	1,374,547
Kittitas	905	580,035	2,961,833	10,945,370
Klickitat	741	960,614	3,859,102	3,083,797
Lewis	2,230	255,012	1,893,636	7,935,581
Lincoln	959	1,422,981	21,035,259	3,253,383
Mason	328	35,518	202,594	728,250
Okanogan	1,762	2,048,406	10,681,584	5,723,537
Pacific	499	53,348	819,224	1,086,617
Pend Oreille	366	124,239	265,001	1,222,488
Pierce	2,535	153,363	4,928,685	10,850,000
San Juan	209	45,707	91,694	595,403
Skagit	1,740	141,770	6,722,958	9,167,984
Skamania	177	20,177	283,595	259,736
Snohomish	2,919	148,604	2,788,695	12,899,240
Spokane	2,990	822,006	15,091,158	8,403,816
Stevens	1,608	803,776	3,836,457	5,676,015
Thurston	1,220	142,170	1,952,408	5,836,930
Wahkiakum	302	26,299	174,415	1,052,642
Walla Walla	981	822,729	19,957,499	4,228,801
Whatcom	3,151	185,045	3,943,630	17,706,625
Whitman	1,824	1,485,709	43,632,434	7,398,484
Yakima	6,010	1,884,694	75,760,207	32,919,536
State Total	51,577	18,716,972	353,816,184	215,388,266

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1959.

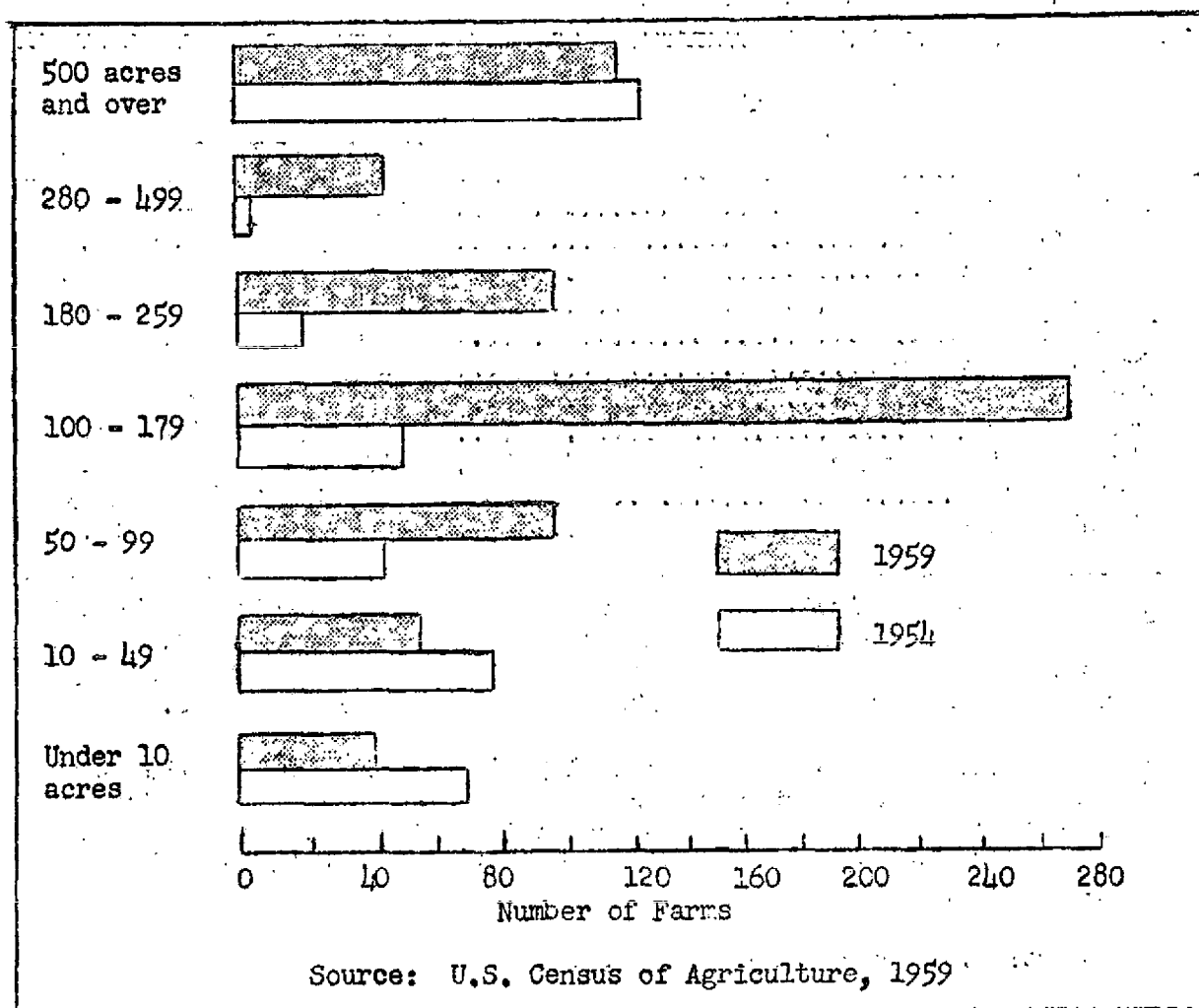


Figure 7. Number and size of Franklin County Farms, 1954 and 1959.

Although the trend is toward more and smaller farms in irrigated areas, the majority of Franklin County's agricultural land has been and continues to be in large holdings. Of 590,027 acres of farmland in the county in 1959, 84 percent was in 107 large farms having at least 1,000 acres each. Seventy-six percent was held by 76 farms of over 2,000 acres each. Most of the county's large farms are in dry-land wheat areas, only two farms reported irrigating 500 acres or more in 1959 and none irrigated 1,000 acres.

Types of Farms

Raising grain for cash predominates among Franklin County's agricultural activities. Cash-grain farms went up in number from 186 in 1954 to 339 in 1959. Their proportion compared to all farms, however, decreased from 45 to 40 percent during the same period because of the increase in other farm types brought on by irrigation. Only fruit and poultry operations were fewer in 1959 than in 1954, all others having gained. The trend in farm numbers indicated in the table does not necessarily indicate trend in acreages, however, because of changing farm size.

Table 11. Types of Farms, Franklin County, 1959

Type of Farms ^{1/}	Number of Farms		Percent of all farms in the County	
	1954	1959	1954	1959
Total farms in county ^{2/}	413	742	--	--
Field crop farms.....	186	339	45.0	45.7
Cash-grain.....	186	303	45.0	40.1
Other field crop.....	0	36	0	4.9
Vegetable farms.....	0	5	0	0.7
Fruit-and-nut farms.....	20	15	4.8	2.0
Poultry farms.....	15	5	3.6	0.7
Dairy farms.....	5	45	1.2	6.1
Livestock farms other than poultry and dairy.	31	87	7.5	11.7
General farms.....	42	118	10.2	15.9
Miscellaneous and unclassified farms.....	102	130	24.7	17.5

^{1/} The data are estimates made for all farms upon the basis of tabulation of data for a sample of approximately one-fifth of all farms. These estimates are subject to sampling errors and will not agree exactly with totals obtained by the tabulation of data for all farms.

^{2/} The definition used for a farm in 1959 is more restrictive than that used for 1954 and part of the changes in the number of farms from 1954 to 1959 resulted from the change in definition. Reduction in number of farms due to change for Franklin County between 1954 and 1959 is 23.

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Utilization of Farmland

Of the county's 806,400 acres, 73 percent was in farmland in 1959. Crops were harvested from 28 percent of the farmland. Pasture, including cropland and woodland used for pasture, accounted for 42 percent of all farm acreage. Summer fallow, idle cropland, and other land, mostly in dryland wheat areas, took up the remaining 30 percent.

Farm Values

Average and total farm values increased from 1900 to 1920, then dropped slightly during the depression and drought years. Total farm value then increased greatly during the development of irrigation from 1950 to 1959. Average farm values were also up considerably in 1950 and 1954, then decreased due to the subdivision of units in the irrigation district. Per acre values declined from 1910 to 1940 and have shown rapid gains since then. The average farm was worth \$67,329 in 1959, which was \$23,254 above the state average. Farmland that year was worth \$89.17 an acre, \$59.57 below the state average; this is caused by the large acreages in dryland farms and masks the presence of higher priced land in irrigated sections. The calculated total value of all farmland and buildings in the county in 1959 was \$49,958,118.

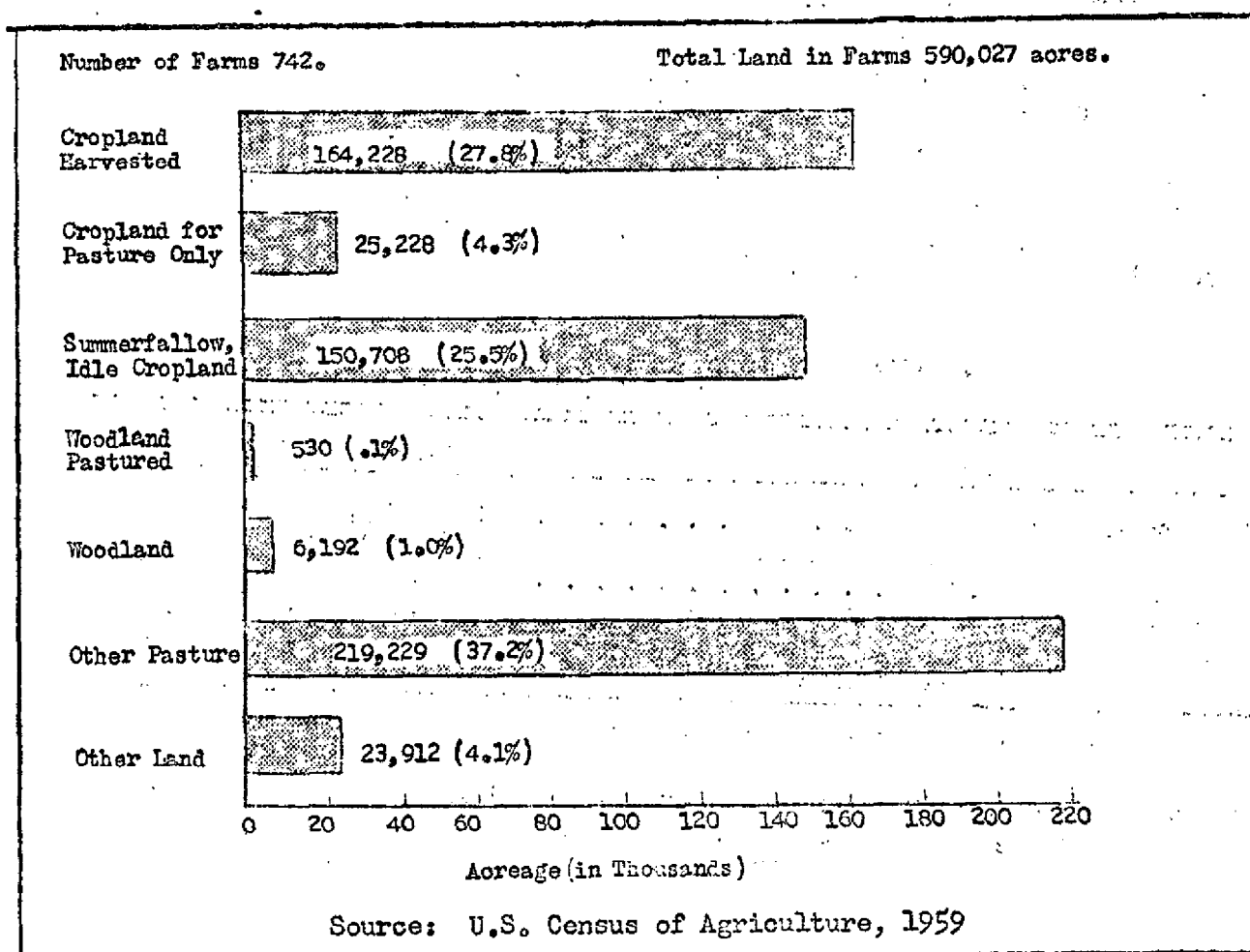


Figure 8. Utilization of Farmland in Franklin County, 1959

Table 12. Value of Farm Land and Buildings.
Franklin County, 1900-1959. 1/

Year	County Average Values		Value of All Farm Land and Buildings in County (dollars)
	Per Farm (dollars)	Per Acre (dollars)	
1900	1,651	0.99	100,720
1910	11,688	18.67	7,246,536
1920	19,299	17.51	7,989,678
1930	19,286	12.33	6,827,213
1940	18,420	14.96	6,686,351
1950	60,008	37.35	19,862,648
1954	78,134	72.41	32,269,342
1959	67,329	89.17	49,958,118

1/ Data are based on reports for a sample of farms.

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Irrigation

The number of irrigated farms rose from 180 in 1950 to 266 in 1954. By 1959 the total was 617, or 83 percent of all county farms. Irrigated farms in 1959 contained 236,132 acres altogether, which was 40 percent of all farmland in the county. Of this total, 60,295 acres actually were irrigated. Of 68,350 acres in cropland harvested from irrigated farms, 52,355 acres were irrigated. When compared with the 3,395 acres of irrigated cropland harvested in 1950 this illustrates the impact made by the Columbia Basin Project. The majority of farms (432) in 1959 irrigated between 50 and 200 acres, with the average size of irrigated farm 303 acres.

Table 13. Cropland on Irrigated Farms
Franklin County, 1959, 1954, 1950

Item	1959	1954	1950
Number of irrigated farms.	617	266	180
Cropland harvested from irrigated farms (acres)	68,350	24,598	7,406
Land irrigated (acres).	60,295	12,830	4,453
Irrigated cropland harvested (acres)	52,355	11,262	3,395
Pastured cropland on irrigated farms (acres)	11,891	3,661	5,278
All land in irrigated farms (acres)	236,132	132,738	43,622

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Water for crops is provided largely by the Columbia Basin Project which provided irrigation for 56,412 acres in 1959. Local ground water sources provided water for 1,363 acres, and 13 farms reported having surface water available for irrigation.

Farm Tenure and Residence

About 20 percent more farms were operated by full owners in 1959 than in 1925. Those operated by tenants have undergone a corresponding decrease percentagewise. Percentages under part owners and managers have fluctuated only slightly. The 1959 Census of Agriculture showed 478 farms (64 percent of all farms) under full ownership where the owner operated only the land he owned. Another 188 farms (25 percent) were under part owners who operated the land they owned and also rented land from others. Nine percent were run by tenants who rented from the owners or worked on shares. Farms operated by managers who work for wages are in the minority in Franklin County, and accounted for only 1 percent of all farms in 1959.

Land in farms by tenure of operator gives a different picture than that of farm numbers. The 1959 Census showed 370,831 acres, or 63 percent of all farmland in the county, as operated by part owners. This indicates that although only 25 percent of the farms are under part ownership these tend to be the larger farms. Full owners in 1959, although having 64 percent of the farms, operated only 18 percent of the land in farms.

Ninety percent of farm operators lived on their farms in 1959, while the other 10 percent lived either in other rural residences or in town. Operators who worked off their farms at least part-time numbered 300, and 229 of these spent 100 days or more at off-farm work. Income from non-farm sources exceeded that

from sale of farm products for 203 operators.

Table 14. Number and Percentage of Farms by Tenure of Operator, Franklin County, 1925-1959.

Year	Number of Farms in County	Number of Farms				Percent of All Farms			
		Full Owners	Part Owners	Managers	Tenants	Full Owners	Part Owners	Managers	Tenants
1925	348	152	99	8	89	43.7	28.4	2.3	25.6
1930	354	144	119	8	83	40.7	33.6	2.3	23.4
1935	426	224	102	19	81	52.6	23.9	4.5	19.0
1940	363	204	96	4	59	56.2	26.4	1.1	16.3
1945	300	156	90	4	50	52.0	30.0	1.3	16.7
1950	331	174	92	4	61	52.6	27.8	1.2	18.4
1954	413	231	110	2	70	55.9	26.6	0.5	16.9
1959	742	478	188	10	66	64.4	25.3	1.3	8.9

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture.

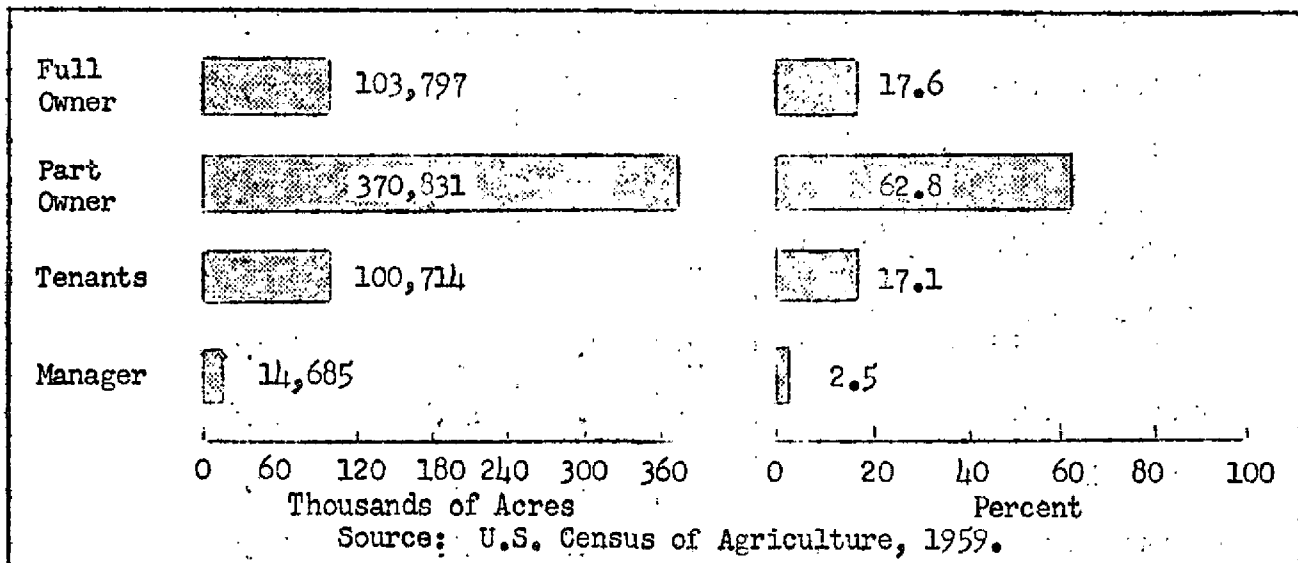


Figure 9. Land in Farms by Tenure of Operator, Franklin County, 1959.

Facilities and Equipment

As farming becomes more and more mechanized, a farmer's production capability and standard of living are reflected in the facilities and equipment at his disposal. Comparison of the number of Franklin County with all Washington farms with respect to non-specialized items in 1959 shows 20 percent fewer Franklin County farms with telephones, 8 percent more with home freezers, 11 percent more with motortrucks, 9 percent more with tractors, and 2 percent fewer having automobiles. This indicates that farmers in the county are, generally speaking, on a par with those in the rest of the state.

A look at more specialized equipment shows a greater percentage of Franklin

County farmers having combines, corn pickers, pick-up balers, field forage harvesters, and power operated elevators, conveyors, or blowers. This reflects the greater emphasis on grain, hay and other field crops as compared with the state as a whole. Fewer farms in the county have milking equipment, percentagewise, as dairying is a minor activity.

The percentage of farms having the listed items increased from 1954 to 1959 for all items except telephones, combines, and crawler tractors. The reduced usage of grain equipment reflects the slight de-emphasis on grain crops accompanying the increase in irrigated field crops.

Table 15. Specified Facilities and Equipment on Farms,
Franklin County, 1959. 1/

Facility or Equipment Item	Number of Farms Using		Percent of Farms in County Equipped		Percent of All Farms in State Equipped
	1959	1954	1959	1954	1959
Telephone	487	282	65.5	70.3	85.5
Home Freezer	509	188	68.4	46.9	61.1
Milking Machine	76	23	10.2	5.7	19.9
Electric Milk Cooler	55	<u>2/</u>	7.4	<u>2/</u>	11.8
Crop Drier (for grain, forage or other crops)	15	<u>2/</u>	2.0	<u>2/</u>	0.8
Power Operated Elevator, Conveyor or Blower	225	<u>2/</u>	30.2	<u>2/</u>	18.4
Grain Combines	265	165	35.6	41.1	16.6
Corn Pickers	40	0	5.4	0	0.8
Pick-up Balers	168	47	22.6	11.7	15.4
Field Forage Harvester	78	28	10.5	7.0	6.6
Motortrucks	617	303	82.9	75.6	72.2
Tractors	680	340	91.4	84.8	82.6
Crawler Tractors	160	120	21.5	29.9	21.3
Automobiles	651	346	87.5	86.3	89.7

1/ Data are based on reports for a sample of farms. 2/ Not reported.

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1959.